

# LANDOWNER-LESSEE/SPORTSMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

## **Minutes of Regular Meeting Tuesday, July 19, 2005 Hilton Sedona Resort and Spa**

### **Committee Members Present**

Sanford Cohen, OHV-Sportsmen Group  
Stephen Williams, Arizona State Land Department  
John P. King, Livestock Grower  
Julie Decker, Bureau of Land Management  
Ron Eichelberger, Sportsmen Group  
Joe Underwood, Sportsmen Group  
Joe Melton, Arizona Game and Fish Commission  
James O'Haco, Livestock Grower  
Tami Emmett, Coronado National Forest

### **Committee Members Absent**

Richard Rico, Special Services Assistant Director, AGFD  
David Hoyle, Sportsmen Group  
Darcy Ely, Livestock Grower  
Hubby Grounds, Livestock Grower  
Jon Fugate, Sportsmen Group

### **Others Present**

Josh Avey, Landowner Relations Program Manager, AGFD  
Steve Barker, Natural Resource Conservation Service  
Sue Chilton, Livestock Grower  
Troy Christensen, Landowner Relations Program, AGFD  
Pete Cimellaro, Sportsman  
Jay Cook, Law Enforcement Program Manager, AGFD  
Bruce Johnson, Sportsman  
Mark Weise, Development Branch Chief, AGFD

### **Meeting Notes**

The Landowner-Lessee/ Sportsman Relations Committee (Committee) meeting was called to order at 1:36 p.m. There was a round table introduction of Committee members and others present. Josh Avey informed the members that Shelby Bennett had passed away on July 10, 2005 after serving for nearly twenty years on the Committee.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The Committee accepted the meeting minutes for April 17, 2005.

### **Commissioner's Comments**

Commissioner Melton, who was Chairman of this Committee prior to his appointment to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission (Commission), commented on the importance of the work the Committee does, since the Commission is often addressing issues involving private lands. He expressed his appreciation of everyone who participates on the Committee.

### **Updates/Current Issues**

There was not a whole lot to update the Committee on since the last meeting in April. Josh Avey informed the Committee that the Landowner Relations Program (LRP) is on track for nearly a million dollars worth of projects this fiscal year, much of which will be matched by the Natural Resource Conservation Service, other agencies, and non-government organizations (NGO).

Mr. Avey informed the Committee that he had been selected to fill the Executive Staff Assistant position in the Director's Office, effective July 30, 2005. Sal Palazzolo will serve as the Program Manager until the position can be filled.

Committee members reviewed the nominations, which had been received for the Commission's Habitat Steward of the Year Award. Various members offered input on the two nominees, Jack Tellas of the Double U Ranch, near Tombstone, and Steve Pierce of the Las Vegas Ranch, near Prescott. After discussion, the Committee decided to support the nomination of Steve Pierce for this year's award and to save the nomination of Mr. Tellas for consideration next year.

Stephen Williams and Troy Christensen offered suggestions regarding filling the vacant livestock grower position on the Committee. Other Committee members are encouraged to inform Troy Christensen of any possible candidates.

### **Update on Title 28 Rewriting**

Jay Cook, Law Enforcement Program Manager, gave a PowerPoint presentation to explain the efforts being made to create uniform off-highway vehicle (OHV) laws. He started by showing the dramatic increase in OHV use in the state, which is up by 242% since 1998. Committee members described some of the abuses committed by OHV operators. Mr. Cook explained some of the limitations law enforcement officers currently face in addressing OHV issues. He explained the ongoing multi-agency effort to create uniform laws and funding sources to improve the abilities of the various law enforcement agencies. Commissioner Melton mentioned some concerns sportsmen have regarding how the designation of roads can affect hunting laws and road closures. Sanford Cohen gave some insight into this issue since he has been actively involved in helping the Forest Service with some of their road and trail designations. Stephen Williams informed Mr. Cook that the Arizona State Land Department and the Arizona Game and Fish Department (Department) created a Wildcat Road Protocol; he suggested that the written agreement might be helpful to the Arizona OHV Legislative Workgroup as they work through some of the wildcat road issues.

Jay Cook said the goal is to have the revisions to Title 28 ready for the State Legislature in 2006. Although it is too preliminary to give any specifics, Mr. Cook said an OHV sticker program is being proposed, which will generate funding for enforcement and the creation of OHV recreation areas. A stable funding source is expected to be a big help to OHV management. Mr. Cook said it would also be helpful if we could find a way to fill an OHV Coordinator position.

## **Identification of Current Issues and Possible Solutions**

Joe Underwood asked if the LRP was successful in partnering with NGO's to raise the additional \$50,000.00 needed for the Peck Canyon perpetual right-of-way project. Josh Avey said that the required amount of money was not raised. He added the opportunity to create a permanent access to Peck Canyon is not off the table, but the project has to start over from the beginning. The LRP is already working with the adjacent landowner to try to reach a solution.

Sanford Cohen asked for an update on access at the Boquillas Ranch. Josh Avey replied that Floyd White, the LRP Heavy Equipment Operator, is currently on his third pay period of grading roads on that ranch. The ranchers are pleased with the road maintenance. The Department is expecting to get a signed agreement from the Navajo Nation on August 8<sup>th</sup>, which will trade access for multiple water and habitat projects. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Arizona Elk Society, Arizona Deer Association, and Mule Deer Foundation are contributing funds for the projects, which the Department is matching.

Sanford Cohen asked what effects the Cave Creek Complex Fire would have on public access. And if there were any plans for replacing signage. Josh Avey said that the LRP has not had any involvement in that situation, except for cooperating with some ranches within the area.

Sanford Cohen took a few minutes to honor Shelby Bennett for his contributions to this Committee and for his cooperation with the Department and sportsmen.

## **Next Meeting**

The Committee decided that the next meeting should be scheduled in conjunction with the January Meet the Commission Event. The next meeting will be held at the Arizona Game and Fish Department offices at 2222 W. Greenway Road in Phoenix. The meeting is scheduled to begin Saturday, January 21, 2006, at 9:00 a.m.

## **Action Items:**

1. Meeting minutes distributed. (LRP Staff)
2. Prepare the Committee's recommendation of Steve Pierce for the Habitat Steward of the Year Award and deliver it to Director's Office. (LRP Staff)
3. Contact Chuck Chambers, Cochise County Cattle Growers Association, regarding finding someone from Cochise County to fill the vacant livestock grower position on the Committee. (LRP Staff)
4. Inform Troy Christensen of any possible candidates for filling the vacant livestock grower position on the Committee. (All)